1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

pole in a circle but merely move forward and backward. During the performance it is prohibited for anyone to pass by the head of the sick person. The shaman will sing all night and if by morning the sick person has not shown any marked improvement the woman shaman will lie in a hammock with her head pointing to the east and will continue the singing. Other women will sit in the hammock with her and sing all day long. I myself underwent such attention. If the wife shows little interest in the welfare of her husband it is concrete proof that she does not love him and it is believed he will die. In this there are two factors to be considered from my observation of these people. The first is that a lack of wifely interest is the equivalent of bad medicine and that the husband himself will feel so disconsolate that all desire to live will be lost.

If the sick person dies during the night nothing is done except to stop the singing and dancing. At daybreak his people will drink vast quantities of chica and prepare for the funeral rites. If the sick person happens to be a woman in her menstrual period it is important to note that she is in the care of the woman shaman. The man shaman does not dare to sing to her.

In the morning the dead person is washed by the women and the body is wrapped in a hammock and taken to the burial place. The brothers and the uncles carry the body. The father and mother do not accompany the body to the grave, but in the case of a married man the widow does. The body is interred in the hammock with the head pointing to the east. The bow and arrows, whatever clothing he may have possessed, and any equipment are buried with him, but neither food nor water is necessary. The night after the burial there is a feast in the camp, but the taboo on fish is observed by everyone. The shaman and the people will sing the equivalent of:

The dead one died here, now he has arrived in the Land of Kuma, and there he has been made young again (if a child dies, it becomes a young man or woman, according to the sex). He will know nothing but joy now and will have everything he may desire.

The widow goes on a strict diet for four days. All fires which were burning at the time of the death of the individual are put out and fresh ones are built. On the fourth day the two men, who have put the dead body into the pit, and the widow, bathe; they fast on the fifth. On the fifth night the shaman sings in order to find out if the dead person has reached Kuma, if he has been given a new name, if he has been made young, strong, and rich. For a month after this the widow keeps a strict diet and she is not married for a long time. It is believed that if a man marries a widow soon after her husband has died he will die soon of the same sickness.

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

LIFE AFTER DEATH

761 775 To the modern Yaruro death is a desirable event. It holds great promise rather than terror for him. He believes that the dead will continue to live in the Land of Kuma. That is, in the land of the Mother Goddess, where he will be restored to a life of pristine happiness in the world which is identical with that which existed before the coming of the white man. In that world, in the Land of Kuma, he will have freedom to hunt if he pleases, he will have an abundance of food, he will have horses, cattle, and tobacco. He will lead a life of eternal bliss, watching over the affairs of his relatives and descendants on this earth, visiting them occasionally through the shaman and conversing with them. Apparently his only wish is that his people will die and join him in the Land of Kuma at the earliest possible time. A better idea of this life after death can be obtained by turning to the chapters on the shamanistic performances and legends.

PLAY

522 152 The spirit of play is known to the Yaruros. In fact, they laugh so much and so often that one might get the impression that they take life very lightly. For instance, their response to any accident is laughter. A man may fall out of his canoe or hurt himself in some way, or a woman may break a pot; any such accident is taken as a fine joke by everyone else.

616 606 There is inner-moiety and joking relationship, but members of one moiety do not play pranks on members of the other moiety. In fact, even in camp the mother-in-law will keep aloof from any levity engaged in by the son-in-law, and vice versa.

533 535 524 In the dancing and singing there is gaiety, especially when Puaná visits his people. Then is a time for much laughter and joking. However, there is no formalized play among the Yaruros. Anciently it is reported that the Otomacos had a ball game. Gilii has given us a description of it.[6]

857 462 861 The most common form of play among the children is an imitation of the activities of the grown-ups. The little boys will pretend that they are hunting and fishing or canoeing; the little girls will pretend that they are making pottery, basketry, or painting their bodies. The toys which the children use are miniature implements of hunting and food gathering. The only objects made differently for children to play with which are not an imitation of anything used by the adults are small clay figures representing human beings. These are arranged by the child in imitation of human beings dancing around

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[6] If the Yaruros knew this ball game they have forgotten it since then.

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

182 515 been in motion, with sound production, as if in anticipation of something to be swallowed. Commonly, swallowing ensues, if the object is not disagreeable. Such behavior is conspicuous in chimpansee, which for purposes of comparison will be used in this report as type. Such familiar expressions as fleapicking, hairdressing, skintreatment, toiletmaking, frequently are used to refer to forms or aspects of the pattern of primate behavior which has been described.

Grooming is a biological habit, and like all such habits can either be perpetuated by a culture or smothered, "repressed". Among the very primitive peoples of South America I have seen habits that approximate the definition given by Yerkes. Delousing is the most common form. The lice are generally picked off and crushed between the teeth. Ticks that cover one in great numbers are likewise taken off. In this the subject of the attention generally sits very quietly, while the performer acts with evident pleasure. He or she may talk and jest much more than the subject.

515 Among the Yaruros the most common forms of social grooming are the removal of lice, ticks, and the crushing of insect-bite blisters. For this latter function carved sticks are used. One end of it is used to search for the lice and to crush them and the other end is used for the blisters. This attention is generally given by the mothers to the children and the wives to their husbands, generally on the return from the day's hunt. I myself have been the recipient of such attention from Yaruro women. Not having a wife of my own, my sisters by courtesy, or adoption, took care of my body.

182 515 It is difficult to say that the talk, jesting, smiles, that accompany these attentions are a result of the biological instinct. I am inclined to think that the culture pattern is here at work with its attendant repressions. For instance, often I have seen grimaces on the faces of the performer, the subject, and even of those standing about when a louse is crushed or a blister is broken. Is this a purely biological reaction or does it follow the pattern of conduct? Even primitive peoples are slaves to culture.

Religion and Shamanism

The Yaruro World

185 775 Uppermost in the Yaruro consciousness is their conviction that they are faced with extinction—that Kuma exists and that she is waiting for them in her land. It was easy to prevail upon my informants to talk about Kuma and the world to which they will go upon dying. The other phases of their beliefs were difficult to bring to their attention, for the Yaruro life in this world has practically ceased. As a group, the desire to live and to continue has died. They see the hopelessness of any struggle to preserve their traditional

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

culture or themselves against a superior culture and ruthless "civilized" bandits. Their only consolation is Kuma and the Land of Kuma.

Nevertheless, being realists they not only continue their daily activities of hunting and gathering foods, but also in finding daily solace through their environment and the shamanistic contact with Kuma. The Yaruro is nature conscious. Perhaps his lonely existence has made him ecstatically responsible to the world about him, for often they talked of the beauty of various phenomena; but stronger than any such feeling is their sense of intimate relationship with the sun, the moon, the stars, their animal life. The falling stars at night are interpreted by them to be messengers sent by Kuma to encourage her people, the Yaruros; the moon is friendly, and on moonless nights the stars represent the crowds of their ancestors who live with Kuma. The wind blows incessantly and it blows to them the roar of the araguatos (the howlers), which, to them, represent distant relatives once human beings, but changed into monkeys by life in the trees at the time of the great flood; the toninos, frolicking at night in the water, are also another race who failed to climb the rope which Hatchawa let down to bring his people to the surface. It is in such a friendly world that the Yaruro literally sits, listens, and looks, almost communing with his environment. Perhaps it is not out of place to mention at this point that this reaction on the part of the Yaruros is not difficult to understand, that perhaps we ought not to rationalize this attitude of the Yaruro entirely on the basis of superstition or religious ideas; anyone who has lived on the plains, exposed day and night to nature, soon loses any feeling of lonesomeness. This response on the part of the Yaruros is shared by the llaneros, who do not seem to be so perfectly at ease as when they are alone in the plains.

THE YARURO UNIVERSE

According to the Yaruros the world has experienced a series of metamorphoses. Some of the events which have transformed the world from its original form are attributed to the direct intervention of the various gods and races of mankind, but others remain unexplainable.

How much of Yaruro cosmic ideas have been borrowed from the missionaries it is difficult to say at this point. Missionaries have been among them from time to time but the Yaruros have been abandoned so completely so many times that the result and confusion is difficult if not impossible to unravel—a thing which can be done only when we have thorough descriptive studies of the various tribes of the Columbian plains and the tribes of Guiana. The comparative ma-

4: Leeds E-5 (1958) 1960 SS19 Yaruro SS19

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Christian Venezuelans, which lies between the two lower celestial domes and existed prior to Ku'maⁿ.

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It is to be noted that Ku'maⁿ was not responsible for creating her fellow primordial gods. She is not an omnipotent creator but is fundamentally limited to creating other-world and hither-world things familiar to the Yaruro. She exists in an independent but loosely coordinate status with other celestial beings or phenomena like Thunder, Sun, Moon, the stars, the rainbow, and possibly Dios — the prototype for personal status among the Yaruro. Furthermore, despite wide variation in creation myths, the fact stands out, too, that she must almost equal honors with Poa'naⁿ in the creation of all that is vital to the Yaruro in the hither-world in a creational division of labor closely paralleling the division of labor found in the actual economy. Further, Ku'maⁿ and Poa'naⁿ, by the link of marriage, provide a prototype for the essential productive and distributional unit, the household. Hachawa, their son according to some informants, and Icial, Poa'naⁿ s'ster's son, both boys at the time of the creation, contribute little and are as much nuisance as help until they have matured, an apt reflection of the position of children in Yaruro economy. Today Poa'naⁿ and Ku'maⁿ seem preeminent in status among the gods, but at the same time are definitely merely *primi inter pares*, occupying the position of more experienced elders within the community of the gods, each of whom acts autonomously according to his own dictates.

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The community of the gods is again prototypic for Yaruro hither-world life. Each god and his land constitutes a sort of village community populated by the god or gods, by dead *pumé*, by dead animals, and by the regular other-worldly animal population especially jaguars in human form and dress. The human-like inhabitants of the other-world eat, drink, dance, have sex relations, and visit from god's land to god's land. They enter into the web of kinship which ties the gods to each other, to the dead Yaruro, and to the live *pumé* of the hither-world in complex, if varying, genealogical connections. Even the great jaguar god, T.ó whose bailiwick is the first celestial dome and whose main task, under the general direction of Ku'maⁿ, is to cure, is considered distantly related and of the family of Poa'naⁿ. A number of animal species are similarly distantly related, but like those Yaruro who cannot be fitted into the kinship system, are merely connected to us nominally. The gods, the dead, and the live *pumé* equally observe kinship obligations. Thus kinship and visits among the autonomous lands of the gods are the chief ties holding the four other-worlds together, a prototype for Yaruro village and social structure. (3)

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Howewer, in relationship to the living, Ku'maⁿ is 'our chief'. More than any other god, she is turned to for advice, for ethical reaffirmations, and for fulfillment of needs. It is first to Ku'maⁿ bright and golden land that the *pumé* go at death, during unconsciousness, in dreams, and during the religious ceremonies, the *tonghés*. The other lands are visited later and are less important in the other-worldly journeys made by the living. The dead of Ku'maⁿ land are the first to be called upon by the shaman when, during the *tonghés*, he arrives in the other-worlds. He asks them, as well as Ku'maⁿ and the other gods, to

(3) Eliade (1954) emphasizes this prototypic quality of "primitive" ideologies throughout the book.

4: Leeds E-5 (1958) 1960 SS19 Yaruro SS19

776 775 return to earth and guide the community. In this manner, Ku'maⁿ is a center of gravity of the Yaruro ideological life. She is the center of a communications network which ties the Yaruro of the hither-world, those of the other-worlds, and the gods all in one continuous system of personal and social relations. This is somewhat the position of the spokesman or 'capitan' in the community life of the Yaruro, though he has proportionally much less influence in his village than Ku'maⁿ has in her universe.

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775 776 772 In sum, the gods and the dead are conceptualized as continuous with those of us on earth. Conceptually they appear to constitute the two highest steps in the age levels: infant, child, young adult, elder, the dead, and the gods. The last four classes are increasingly instrumental in teaching the ethics of living in tranquility, of respect and deference to one's spouse and to all members of one's people, and in teaching the values of the community. They exhort but never compel the community to follow these ideals. These precepts are followed not only among the egalitarian gods in their autonomous other-world communities, but in the personal and social relations between the gods and the hither-world *pumé*. The relations between men and gods, the communication between the hither-and other-worlds, the cosmography itself, all show quite clearly that there is no separation of "natural" and "supernatural" as discrete classes of events. The cosmos, society, and man are a single system in Yaruro thought.

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796 771 The nexus through which the flow of life in the other-world and the ongoing rhythm of daily life in the hither-world are meshed into a single system is the religious ceremony, the *tonghé*. Some description of the *tonghé* will afford us further insight into Yaruro ideology.

796 756 787 During the night-long *tonghés*, the entire community sits behind the shaman, ranged roughly by age levels. The women sit to his right, the men to his left. At dusk he begins to sing as he starts his journey to the land of Ku'maⁿ through the dark, cold land of Kiberó, the toad who gave man fire. In hundreds of improvised verses and melodies, he describes his journey, and then, after his arrival about midnight, his adventures in the lands of Ku'maⁿ and subsequently of the other gods. In each verse, the shaman sings an intonation which the entire community repeats in an identical antiphon. Thus the full experience of the shaman is transmitted to and shared by every member of the community. All is public; there is no secret knowledge. The shaman urges his people to sing with him and the other-worldly beings, to share in the responsibilities and joys of the community in supporting their individual members whether the shaman in his journey or the sick person for whom the *tonghé* may be being held. At the same time, in Ku'maⁿ land, he urges the other-worldly beings to come to advise his people and teach them. Later, the verses are no longer sung by the shaman, but rather by the dead and the gods who arrive in the husk of the shaman which he has left behind as a channel of communications for the other-worldly beings while his divisible self travels abroad. As these beings arrive in the shaman's husk, all members of the community may greet them by putting their arms around them or giving them cigarettes or drink. This is done separately by women, sometimes in groups, and by men. Throughout the ceremony the chief link between the sexually divided community is the shaman or the gods in the shaman's husk upon whom both sexes are focusing

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Y 186 10 These are in fact presented as enemies or inferiors. The Otomaco, on the contrary, appear to have been friends or relatives who were superior to them. This hierarchy is apparently Y 186 773 confirmed by the Yaruro myth of the creation of men (12) where

12. See "infra" IV List...38.

the Otomaco were the first brought out of a hole in the ground by the masculine divinity Iţiai, the Yaruro arriving only in second place, followed by the other Indians and the Racionales who were the last born. Their birth took place, in addition, just after that of Iţiai but before the flood which submerged the world and only after which the Yaruro were born.

O Y 773 776 The Otomaco seem to have the same divinities and religious manifestations as the Yaruro, as comes out from the words of our informant, Pedro Ramón Camacho, reproduced word for word below.

"They knew who the Kuma (13) was and they were loved by

13. Female Yaruro divinity.

O 776 the Gods. Now in the other world whereas the dead of the other Indians inhabit an isolated village located at the edge of the Universe, on the shore of the sea and some leagues from the Kuma's village, the Otomaco live a little lower than the Kuma's village, like from here to the corridor of forest (some 200 meters), in a village perched on the /11/ mountain. They called the Kuma, Iţiai, and Puana (14) by their names.

14. Another masculine Yaruro divinity, Iţiai's brother.

O Y 775 776 They had, like us, tiyo (protecting spirits represented by stones or pottery remains) and when my spirit walks along the

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way which leads to the other world it will meet after the village of the tiyo of Iţiai, at the left, on the same side, the tiyo of the Otomaco. They sang and danced (shamanistic ceremony) during the day when Kuma and Iţiai were still living on earth. When they ran off into the other world they continued to sing and dance but at night. During their songs they walked, the old men of past times used to say."

Pedro Ramón Camacho completed his account with a quatrain of this song which had been repeated to him by a grandfather, but the meaning of which he did not know:

gwačarka hihi gwačarka hihi
gwačarka hihi gwačarka hihi
pideruba pideruba pideruba hihi
pideruba pideruba pideruba hihi

The Otomaco are presented in Yaruro legends as being in the beginning three animals: the mono (15), the araguato (16),

15. Monkey (Cebus nigrivittatus), in Venezuelan.

16. Howling monkey (Alouetta ursina), in Venezuelan.

and the chigüire (17).

17. Capybara, large amphibious rodent (Hydrochoerus hydrochoeris), in Venezuelan.

The transformation of the Otomaco into monos and araguatos seems to have occurred at the time of the flood unleashed by Iţiai to cleanse the world of all the moral disorder which reigned there. Some Otomaco took refuge in the trees